

DUSTON POST LETTER BOX.

This department is intended to answer questions that are of general interest. Its object is to supply out-of-the-way facts and information. Questions of personal interest only will not be answered. No names or personal addresses will be given. Correspondence should be addressed to the letter box, care Houston Post. Only the number of questions received answers will be given. Questions not answered will not always be given promptly.

Why is there no inquest held over a person who dies in a convent?
A.C.R.
If the death is under suspicious circumstances the fact that it occurred in a convent does not prevent an inquest being held.

When did public schools come into existence?
D.H.H.

In Sparta, under the system of Lycurgus, a State undertook the education of the children. In Athens there were public schools for all classes. In making Athens the universal city of the universe. The education of the children was a religious duty among the Jews. After the captivity they developed an excellent system of parochial schools in connection with the synagogues. The third Lateran council in 1179 ordained the establishment of a grammar school in every cathedral for the education of the poor. This idea of universal education has been carried out by the efforts of the Jesuits and other religious orders. Luther, in 1523, with the aid of Melancthon, drew up the Saxon school system for the education of the young of all classes in free schools. In Prussia the movement in behalf of a thoroughly popular system of education, though more fully carried out in any other country of the continent, has not commenced until the early part of the present century. Enactments rendering the attendance of the children at the schools compulsory had been upon the statute book since 1717. Scotland is the only other country of Europe which had at an early period a system of common or popular schools. These schools, which have diffused a more general elementary education among the people of Scotland than exists in any other nation of Europe, except, perhaps, Prussia, have always been under the charge of the kirk.

Is it the law of the United States that presidents are to be chosen in each State by popular vote?
A.B.C.

It was not until 1823 that presidential elections in all the States (South Carolina was an exception) were chosen by popular vote in their respective States. Originally and for many years there were no National nominating conventions, and prior to 1820 the general custom was for the legislatures of the several States to choose the requisite number of electors, who voted for such candidate as they favored, the nominee receiving the largest vote becoming president and the man receiving the next highest vote becoming vice president. The legislatures of the several States have, under the constitution, the right to choose presidential electors without reference to the vote of the citizens, if such a method of election be lawfully prescribed by the legislatures; and as late as 1876 Colorado legislators chose the three electors to represent that State, without any popular vote, in the electoral college. It was the three votes of Colorado which turned the scale from one party to another in that year.

What is the origin of the word admiral, and to whom was the title originally applied?
A.V.W.

The word admiral is derived by the dictionaries in rather a roundabout fashion from the Arabic Emir, a word which has been variously translated lord, commander, general. An Emir was an officer in the Saracenic and afterward in the Turkish army, and, as these were composed mostly of cavalry, the Emir was originally a cavalry officer. As the conquests of the Turks broadened the Turkish Sultan's power to make war upon the sea, as well as upon the land, and the officers who commanded vessels and fleets retained the title that they had when directing squadrons of horse. The title is found among the Algerines and Barbary pirates, and is first noticed in English use during the reign of Edward III, when officers were commissioned as "Amiral of the sea" or "Admiral of the Navy."

Why is a citizen of the United States called an American, while a citizen of Mexico, Cuba, Brazil, Peru, etc., is respectively a Mexican, Canadian, Brazilian, Peruvian, etc.
J.H.E.

The only real Americans are the aborigines, who were found here by the discoverers. In the sense the term is applied to citizens of the United States it is equally applicable to any one in North or South America. The restriction of the term to people of this country is merely a survival of the time when this part of the continent was the best known to Europeans.

Does Germany's navy rank higher than that of the United States?
The answer is, Germany's navy is considered to be alone considered as high as that of Germany. This, of course, excludes the ships authorized by the Fifty-fifth congress, for if those should be included we would, without doubt, be superior to Germany in all the elements of fighting strength, torpedo craft excepted. During the recent war the total number of vessels flying our pennant was 312.

Does census taking begin immediately after January 1, 1900, and continue until 1901?
J.O.M.

If you mean the enumeration of the population, the answer is, it commences in June of 1900 and is finished as expeditiously as possible. There is much preparatory work to be done, and the clerical labor continues sometime for several years.

What is the rate of pay in the regular army for privates, corporals, sergeants, musicians and warrant officers?
Privates (cavalry, artillery or infantry) are paid at the rate of \$10 per month; corporals \$15, sergeants \$18 (excluding the first sergeant of a company, who receives \$25), chief musicians \$15, principal musicians \$12, chief trumpeter of cavalry \$12, wagoners \$14.

What is the meaning of the letters F. D., that are seen on so many English coins?
J.H.E.
They stand for the Latin words, Fidelis, Defensor, of the Faith. That title was given to King Henry VIII by the Pope, in recognition of a book that the king wrote against the doctrines taught by Martin Luther.

Please give me the names of the war vessels authorized by the last congress.
K.O.W.
The names of the three new battleships authorized by the Fifty-fifth congress will be the New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Georgia. The names of the three new armored cruisers will be the California, Nebraska and West Virginia.

How much land does the government claim to either side of a navigable stream?
G.T.N.

The government merely owns the waterway and has no claim upon the land. The government can condemn such land as is needed for the improvement of a waterway, however.

How is a telegram sent to Manila?
A.R.V.

It is first sent to New York, and from New York to Manila it is sent seven times in transmission. The intermediate stages are to Newfoundland, Ireland, London, Penzance, Lisbon, Malta, Alexandria, Suez, Aden, Bombay, Madras, Penang, Singapore, Saigon and Hong Kong.

MANY IMITATIONS OF MONEY.

Philadelphia, May 5.—The revelation in and starting security to the stupendous counterfeiting conspiracy which has been exposed in this city and in Lancaster by the successful work of Chief Wilbur, of the secret service bureau, and his subordinates, clearly demonstrates, if it needed any demonstration, that, apart from the crime of treason, there is no offense against the laws which Uncle Sam more rigidly punishes and sternly punishes, treason alone excepted, than attacks upon the integrity of his coinage and his currency. In fact, originally, under the old English law, debasement of the coinage of the crown was considered an act of treason, because the making of money was exclusively the province of the sovereign.

In this country, contrary to the general supposition, the jurisdiction of the courts of the United States over this offense is not exclusively, although counterfeiting is not usually prosecuted in the State courts by reason of the fact that Uncle Sam's statutes are much more complete and perfect. Where there are permanent courts of the United States, as, for instance, in Pittsburgh, in this State, there is no difficulty in pursuing schemes of counterfeiters, and the courts are fully equipped for such crimes. But Uncle Sam's jealousy as to the integrity of the money he makes is carried to such an extreme that even all imitations of his coin and currency, even though intended for innocent purposes, are rigidly punished by law, even though they may not be punishable by imprisonment where there is no guilty intent. Notwithstanding this fact, and notwithstanding repeated warnings, counterfeiters have been making money in this city for years, and many thousands of dollars in vain attempts to cry their wares through similitudes of good money.

A very instructive illustration of this fact can be gained by an odd sort of museum in the office of the chief of the secret service division of the treasury department at Washington. Besides pictures of noted false coins, and examples of forged bonds and other such securities, there are numerous representations in this collection of hundreds of advertising devices in which counterfeit imitations of United States money in various forms have been employed. The law is very strict, forbidding individuals to make anything which should legitimately bear the government imprint. The statutes, and there are many of them, are explicit and briefly it may be said that all such imitations are regarded as counterfeits and are treated accordingly. Technically the manufacturers can be prosecuted as counterfeiters, but that is never done when it is evident that there was no criminal intent. The majority of these imitations of money and other government securities are used, as said before, for advertising purposes, although some of them are made for the education of children. The commonest kind of an advertisement is a fac-simile of a dollar with the card of the firm distributing it on the back. Most of these are very cheap affairs and are printed from coarse woodcuts, the lettering as well as the printing being of a very inferior description. No one it would seem should ever be deceived by them, and yet ignorant country people are frequently misled by shavers who have so-called "flash" money. Especially is this so among the colored people of the South, and every time a circus travels through that section the number of victims is legion.

Another and more costly medium of informing the public of the address of a business house is by the use of reduced photographs of United States and National bank notes. These are three inches long by an inch and a half wide and are mounted on cardboard. On the back is the name of the firm. One inventive genius, who also wanted to convey a moral lesson, once devised what he called the "Mighty Dollar advertising series." On the face of the one dollar bill is the representation of a cell tenanted by a young man in a striped suit. Below are the words: "Role is only." The face of the ten dollar bill has the picture of a man in a well-furnished room. The legend below it: "Took \$50,000." The fifty dollar bill shows a portly individual in a handsome library. A pompous roomman has just handed him a scroll, on which are the words: "You are nominated for governor. Will you accept?" The inscription below reads: "Appropriated \$1,000,000." The borders and corners of these bills are made to represent currency, and on the back are advertisements.

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Perhaps the prettiest article in the secret service collection is a sheet of stamps used by all the nations of the world in these days, artistically arranged and representing a beautiful blending of colors. A steel die was used to make each impression, and the whole formed a really clever piece of work. But stamps cannot be counterfeited any more than money, and the sheets were confiscated. A cigar manufacturer got up a new brand of cigars and called it the "Dollar Mark." Inside of each box was a loose sheet of paper containing a big \$ sign surrounded by rays scattering in all directions. The reverse and obverse of the silver dollar. This was truly to be illegal. The manufacturer claimed that no one could be deceived by it, as the impression was much larger than the real silver dollar. But the secret service people thought that as he had to make a die there was nothing to prevent him from making it used for other size, and in this case it might be used for fraudulent purposes. Considering a notice of prevention to be worth a pound of cure, they broke up the die business before any harm had been done.

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AUTHOR OF SOUTHERN SONGS.

Rev. James W. Lee, D. D., and Rev. Nathaniel Lurcock, D. D., of St. Louis, Mo., deserve hearty congratulations on the unparalleled success which they have achieved from the start in the publication of the American Illustrated Methodist Magazine. Ordinarily periodicals which deal purely with religious topics command comparatively little interest in the popular sense of that term on account of the ministerial air which pervades them, but such criticism can not be pronounced upon this publication under review. Both editors are thoroughly orthodox divines who stand high in the Southern Methodist church, but they are also wide-awake and practical men of affairs, who keep in touch with the age in which they live and who realize that even religious bodies are out of date ideas. Some of the features of the present number include, "The Queen of the Antilles," by Bishop Warren A. Candler, "Professor Henry Drummond," by one of his fellow students, "With Rudyard Kipling in Japan," by J. M. D., "Calvin Kinsley," by Stanley Frame, "Stephen Collins Foster," by Edwin Embree, "The Antilles," claims special attention. Having recently visited Cuba, Bishop Candler is well posted on the subject which he undertakes to handle. He vividly describes existing religious conditions in Cuba and states that Protestantism enjoys exceptionally rare opportunities for expansion in that island at the present time.

Other articles in the number are equally full of timely information on religious and religious lines. But we are especially interested in Mr. Embree's article on "Stephen Collins Foster." Mr. Foster was the creator of some of the most delightful of Southern melodies. We can not run over the entire list, but included among the songs which have come from his radiantly gifted pen are, "My Old Kentucky Home," "Massa in the Cold, Cold Ground," "Old Folks at Home," "Swanee River," "Old Folks at Home," "Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming," "Old Uncle Ned" and "Old Black Joe." Mr. Foster was born in Pittsburgh, Pa., on the fifteenth anniversary of the declaration of independence, viz: July 4, 1826; that being also the day on which Adams and Jefferson passed from earth. Though born on Northern soil, Mr. Foster came of typically Southern stock; otherwise he could never have written his songs with which his name is linked. His father, William B. Foster, came from Virginia, and his mother, Eliza Clavland Tomlinson, came from Maryland. Searched by his father, Mr. Embree says:

"Stephen's father was an ardent patriot, and during the war of 1812 was commissioned quartermaster and commissary of the United States army at Pittsburgh, which was the center of operations in the west. He was the poverty of the National treasury could no longer meet the demands of the Army of the Northwest, William Barclay Foster, with his own money and on his own personal account, procured the necessary supplies and assisted in keeping the troops in the field. After the British had sacked the capital and had turned their attention to the capture of New Orleans, General Jackson appealed to the government for funds, ammunition and blankets for the army of defense. Orders were sent to Foster to forward the supplies, but the necessary money was not forthcoming with the same dispatch. Again it became a personal matter with Foster, who from his own store, loaded the steamboat Enterprise and on December 12, 1814, hurried her to New Orleans with instructions to reach the city before the British could sink the boat. On through the wilderness, the winter storms and the ice, Captain Shreve pushed the Enterprise, racing with fate and knowing nothing but the instructions of his chief to reach New Orleans before the British attack. He succeeded in arriving three days before the battle, to which he and his crew helped to avert the American guns behind the ramparts of Fort Mifflin. But the evacuating approach of the government, he it known that judgment stands unshaken against the United States since 1823 in favor of this noble man, who counted nothing as his own in the hour of his country's need, and of whom the judges and the people are justly proud. Termination of his accounts with the government, he charged the jury in the best of his heart, in his own words, 'I am proud of the character for zeal, patriotism and integrity and fidelity which can be forgotten.'"

Such was the father of Stephen Collins Foster. Of Mr. Foster himself, Mr. Embree states many things of interest from the reminiscences of his father. In the first place, he points out that Mr. Foster was gifted in power as well as one, possessing rare musical talent and being able to play the piano, violin and guitar. He was a "speaking of the circumstances under which he composed 'Old Folks at Home,' one of the sweetest airs in the language, Mr. Embree says:

"That most beautiful of all his melodies, 'Old Folks at Home,' which in patois and sympathy lingers on the lips with great effect, all Englishmen, Home, Sweet Home, was composed by his father in his composition. He compared with his father's old words which were perfectly fit the music humming in his soul. The music was perfect, the song was finished, but one word annoyed him. He could not find it. At last, nervous and excited, he walked into his brother's office and abruptly asked for the name of a Southern river of two syllables that could be used in place of the word 'columbia.' With the help of the office clerk the little Suwannee to Florida was rediscovered and made famous forever afterward. 'That's it! That's it!' exclaimed Foster in delight, and with-out a word he left the office and finished the song beginning, 'Way down upon the Suwannee river, my old columbia.' Foster would not deny that the discriminating choice of Foster most perfectly fits his music. The first edition of this famous song bears the name of E. P. Christy as author, which has caused some discussion as to the true authorship, and at one time almost robbed Foster of that which he had so justly earned. He was a willing to purchase the name, but in a Southern river, under the guise of generosity, almost defrauded the genius of his due."

Kansas City Times.

The very fact that the leaders of the republican party are scheming to belittle the questions of the trusts, colonial dependencies, the question of gold and silver coinage should be a sufficient reason why democracy could not afford to hide these burning questions behind the republican party's stalling horse.

Over the Wine and Walnuts.

Louisville Courier-Journal.

Both the people of Germany and the people of the United States refuse to become excited over Captain Coghlan's remarks to his club friends. There is a pretty clear understanding of the world over as to the importance that is to be attached to the observations of gentlemen at the banquet board.

On His Blindness.

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless, though my soul is bright,
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest my true light
I should dim, God doth not light the candle
To be put under a bushel, but to set it on a
Taper, that men may see it.

Either man's work or his own gift, who best
Beats his blind rock, they serve him best,
He kindly thousands at his bidding weaves,
And poet of earth and earth without him,
They also serve who only stand and wait.

—Milton.

Enough for the Democrats.

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Taper, that men may see it.

AUTHOR OF SOUTHERN SONGS.

Rev. James W. Lee, D. D., and Rev. Nathaniel Lurcock, D. D., of St. Louis, Mo., deserve hearty congratulations on the unparalleled success which they have achieved from the start in the publication of the American Illustrated Methodist Magazine. Ordinarily periodicals which deal purely with religious topics command comparatively little interest in the popular sense of that term on account of the ministerial air which pervades them, but such criticism can not be pronounced upon this publication under review. Both editors are thoroughly orthodox divines who stand high in the Southern Methodist church, but they are also wide-awake and practical men of affairs, who keep in touch with the age in which they live and who realize that even religious bodies are out of date ideas. Some of the features of the present number include, "The Queen of the Antilles," by Bishop Warren A. Candler, "Professor Henry Drummond," by one of his fellow students, "With Rudyard Kipling in Japan," by J. M. D., "Calvin Kinsley," by Stanley Frame, "Stephen Collins Foster," by Edwin Embree, "The Antilles," claims special attention. Having recently visited Cuba, Bishop Candler is well posted on the subject which he undertakes to handle. He vividly describes existing religious conditions in Cuba and states that Protestantism enjoys exceptionally rare opportunities for expansion in that island at the present time.

Other articles in the number are equally full of timely information on religious and religious lines. But we are especially interested in Mr. Embree's article on "Stephen Collins Foster." Mr. Foster was the creator of some of the most delightful of Southern melodies. We can not run over the entire list, but included among the songs which have come from his radiantly gifted pen are, "My Old Kentucky Home," "Massa in the Cold, Cold Ground," "Old Folks at Home," "Swanee River," "Old Folks at Home," "Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming," "Old Uncle Ned" and "Old Black Joe." Mr. Foster was born in Pittsburgh, Pa., on the fifteenth anniversary of the declaration of independence, viz: July 4, 1826; that being also the day on which Adams and Jefferson passed from earth. Though born on Northern soil, Mr. Foster came of typically Southern stock; otherwise he could never have written his songs with which his name is linked. His father, William B. Foster, came from Virginia, and his mother, Eliza Clavland Tomlinson, came from Maryland. Searched by his father, Mr. Embree says:

"Stephen's father was an ardent patriot, and during the war of 1812 was commissioned quartermaster and commissary of the United States army at Pittsburgh, which was the center of operations in the west. He was the poverty of the National treasury could no longer meet the demands of the Army of the Northwest, William Barclay Foster, with his own money and on his own personal account, procured the necessary supplies and assisted in keeping the troops in the field. After the British had sacked the capital and had turned their attention to the capture of New Orleans, General Jackson appealed to the government for funds, ammunition and blankets for the army of defense. Orders were sent to Foster to forward the supplies, but the necessary money was not forthcoming with the same dispatch. Again it became a personal matter with Foster, who from his own store, loaded the steamboat Enterprise and on December 12, 1814, hurried her to New Orleans with instructions to reach the city before the British could sink the boat. On through the wilderness, the winter storms and the ice, Captain Shreve pushed the Enterprise, racing with fate and knowing nothing but the instructions of his chief to reach New Orleans before the British attack. He succeeded in arriving three days before the battle, to which he and his crew helped to avert the American guns behind the ramparts of Fort Mifflin. But the evacuating approach of the government, he it known that judgment stands unshaken against the United States since 1823 in favor of this noble man, who counted nothing as his own in the hour of his country's need, and of whom the judges and the people are justly proud. Termination of his accounts with the government, he charged the jury in the best of his heart, in his own words, 'I am proud of the character for zeal, patriotism and integrity and fidelity which can be forgotten.'"

Such was the father of Stephen Collins Foster. Of Mr. Foster himself, Mr. Embree states many things of interest from the reminiscences of his father. In the first place, he points out that Mr. Foster was gifted in power as well as one, possessing rare musical talent and being able to play the piano, violin and guitar. He was a "speaking of the circumstances under which he composed 'Old Folks at Home,' one of the sweetest airs in the language, Mr. Embree says:

"That most beautiful of all his melodies, 'Old Folks at Home,' which in patois and sympathy lingers on the lips with great effect, all Englishmen, Home, Sweet Home, was composed by his father in his composition. He compared with his father's old words which were perfectly fit the music humming in his soul. The music was perfect, the song was finished, but one word annoyed him. He could not find it. At last, nervous and excited, he walked into his brother's office and abruptly asked for the name of a Southern river of two syllables that could be used in place of the word 'columbia.' With the help of the office clerk the little Suwannee to Florida was rediscovered and made famous forever afterward. 'That's it! That's it!' exclaimed Foster in delight, and without a word he left the office and finished the song beginning, 'Way down upon the Suwannee river, my old columbia.' Foster would not deny that the discriminating choice of Foster most perfectly fits his music. The first edition of this famous song bears the name of E. P. Christy as author, which has caused some discussion as to the true authorship, and at one time almost robbed Foster of that which he had so justly earned. He was a willing to purchase the name, but in a